

AT A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Thursday, 15 January 2010.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Stephen Reid

Vice-Chairman:
p Councillor Frederick Allgood

Councillors:

p Charlotte Bailey	a Roz Muschamp
p Ray Bolton	p Pam Mutton
a Rita Burgess	a Sam Payne
p Brian Dash	p Jackie Porter
a Adrian Evans	p Jenny Radley
p Keith Evans	a David Simpson
p David Keast	a Bruce Tennent
a Roger Kimber	a John West
p Anna McNair Scott	a Pat West

Co-opted Members:

a Tony Blackshaw – Diocese of Winchester
a Urszula Topp – Diocese of Portsmouth
p Michael White – Parent Governor
a Sally Dace – Parent Governor

Also in attendance Councillors: Peter Edgar, Assistant to Executive Member for Children's Services (Education) and Marilyn Tucker, Assistant to Executive Member for Children's Services (Safeguarding).

17. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

There were two declarations of interest:

Cllr Jenny Radley is a member of a fostering panel
Cllr Frederick Allgood who in his Winchester City
Council role is portfolio holder for finance and efficiency

18. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee held on 8 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record, except that Cllr Ray Bolton's apology for absence had not been noted. With this amendment, the minutes were signed by the Chairman.

19. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. The Chairman noted that the County's staff, especially those concerned with schools should be praised for their efforts during the recent heavy snow days, and the way in which they exercised responsible management of closures to minimise disruption of children's education through the exceptionally hazardous weather conditions.
- b. The Chairman conveyed the Committee's best wishes for a speedy recovery to David Pryke following the injury to his arm in the recent icy conditions.

20. **REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 – 2012/13**

The Deputy Treasurer provided an overview of the key issue in the revenue budget. Topics included:

- The main variances in the schools budget 2009/10
- Variances in the non-schools budget 2009/10
- 2010/11 schools budget – headroom
- Schools budget – agreed use of headroom
- Further information on 2010/11 – additional headroom
- Non-school budget – agreed pressures
- Non-school budget – redeployment
- Efficiency improvements/budget savings 2010/11
- Summary – schools budget
- Summary – non-schools budget

Committee members asked questions and discussed a number of points arising from the presentation and the budget papers and appendices provided for the meeting.

The Committee was mindful that:

- Savings were being predicted in managing down the number of children looked after. Whilst not doubting the basis on which the projection had been made, it was nevertheless a risk to be ‘banking’ the savings before they were realised.
- The extent to which alternative approaches to delivering services are successful, introduce risk of overspend or service cuts if not successful.
- Challenging economic decisions might be expected from Government after the general Election which could impact on Hampshire’s revenue streams. There was a risk, unquantifiable at this stage, that some assumptions built into the budget might not hold true.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Committee recommends to the Executive Member for Children’s Services that the recommendations in the budget report be approved.
- b. The comments above regarding risks attaching to potential cost savings should be forwarded to the Executive Member
- c. The County Treasurer be thanked for her presentation, which the meeting had found most useful.

21. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 – 2012/13**

The County Treasurer drew attention to key items in his report included within the Agenda papers. The papers included details of:

- The revised budget for 2009/10
- Base budget for 2010/11
- Proposals for growth and redeployment 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13
- Efficiency statement
- Review of income 2010/11
- Business units – summary of trading accounts
- Revenue budget 2010/11 – analysis of variations by division of service
- Revenue Budget 2010/11 – budget book detail
- Workforce levels and costs 2009/10 revised
- Provisional budget 2011/12 and 2012/13

- Provisional budget 2011/12 and 2012/13 – analysis

Committee members queried and commented on the following items in the report:

- Developer contributions: concern was expressed that in some cases such arrangements have not always worked out as expected, with some developers obtaining planning permission, but subsequently failing to deliver the contribution. Members were assured that current negotiations and contracts are well specified with appropriate safeguards.
- New Deal for Schools: Members discussed whether lower cost approaches might be possible to address improvements to repairing and improving temporary classrooms. The Committee was informed that until recently there had been a tendency to replace temporary buildings in a poor state, rather than repair them. The present economic conditions, however, mean that careful consideration has to be given to balancing a range of critical factors in each case, before a decision is made.
- Population expansion in areas of Hampshire: a Member commented that 2012/13 will be a year in which some secondary expansion may be necessary due to recent housing development in areas of the County. However the Capital Programme does not appear to take these demographic changes into account. Subsequent discussion recognised this as a potential issue, but it was also acknowledged that even the current assumptions built into the Programme indicated that Government funding is unlikely to provide many opportunities for investment by local authorities for some while to come.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Committee recommends to the Executive Member for Children's Services that the recommendations in the Capital Programme report be approved.
- b. The Executive Member consider and monitor the impact of potential need for additional secondary provision on the Capital Programme.
- c. The Executive Member consider whether the present

economic climate provides opportunity to gain greater advantage in terms of the schools development offer'

- d. The Executive Member be cautious about linking 'developers' contributions linked to development milestones which experience was showing might well be delayed.
- e. The Executive Member consider both capital and 'revenue' budgets as possibilities to resource repairs to temporary school buildings
- f. The author of the Capital Programme be commended on a clear and useful report.

22. **2009 OFSTED REPORT**

- The Chief Officer for Children's Services summarised the main areas identified in the Ofsted letter. He noted that overall the Ofsted assessment of Children's Services in Hampshire was good but he pointed out that it was predominantly a paper-based exercise. A more detailed analysis of Children's Services performance would be provided to the Committee at its next meeting on 15 April.
- Members questioned whether, in view of the exercise being primarily paper-based, the assessment reflected operational effectiveness in social or education practice.
- It was also questioned whether 'target chasing' might detract from directing effort to achieving consistent, high quality services for the children of Hampshire.,. These two agendas are part of the reality of managing services responsibly, but should not take away from confident, pro-active front line delivery.
- One Member noted that York had received an outstanding Ofsted, and suggested there may be good practice there from which to learn. It was also noted, however, that there may be a relationship between assessment criteria and the type or context of authorities assessed, given the locations of many of the 12 authorities rated as 'excellent'.
- It was observed that in a county as large as Hampshire, it was inevitable that inspections would tend towards the middle ground, because a county will include a wide range of demographic contexts, and there will always be areas of greater challenge - even in a generally high performing authority.

RESOLVED:

- a. The Committee thanked the Chief Officer for the

report and noted the assessment.

23. **CAA Summary**

- It was commented that the summary had value in drawing attention to areas to be addressed by departments, however it was noted that the Committee would be considering the more detailed performance report to be provided to it at the 15 April meeting.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the report be received and noted.

24. **WORK PROGRAMME**

- The Chief Executive presented the Committee's forthcoming work programme (Item 8 in the Minute Book).
- The Chairman and Members of the Committee were invited to consider item in the Work Programme with a view to identifying those items that give the Committee a real opportunity to add value through providing comment to the Executive Member or potentially through undertaking 'light touch' or 'in depth' reviews.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Chairman consider which items should stay on the work programme and which not. He noted that it would be the Committee's preference to discuss a fewer number of items in depth where there is the potential to add real value, rather than to have an over-full agenda that allows little time for substantial consideration of items.
- b. Members were asked to consider the Work Programme in this regard for the next meeting, and meanwhile to submit comments or suggestions to the Chairman or Scrutiny Officer.

Members of the Select Committee to review the work programme with a view to identifying items to be kept (where the committee can add value), or to be culled (where scope for adding value is very limited)

